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# Virginia WILDLIFE

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*A Monthly Magazine for Higher Standards of Outdoor Recreation Through Wildlife Conservation*

## COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



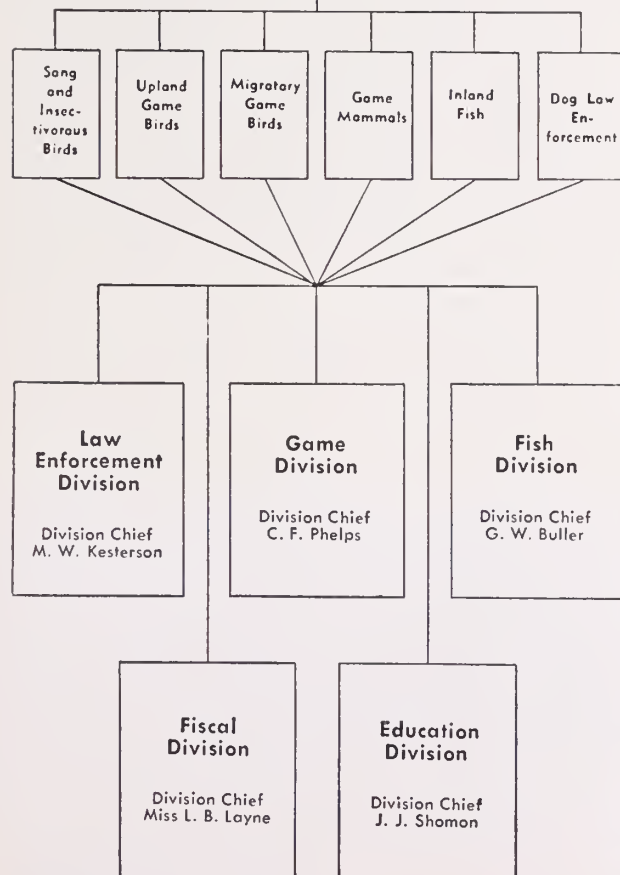
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## *Cover Photo*

The windswept pines stand as sentinels along a lonely stretch of Virginia's coast.

VSCC Photo by Flournoy

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE gratefully receives for consideration all news items, articles, photographs, sketches and other materials which deal with the use, management and study of Virginia's interrelated, renewable natural resources:

WILDLIFE  
|  
SOILS — CONSERVE — WATER  
|  
FORESTS

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# Training for Peace

By WILLIAM GOULD VINAL, "CAP'N BILL"

MORE THAN EVER we must seek *Nature Serenity for Peace*.

On arrival in the deep woods it may be difficult to shake off war nerves. It may take time to adjust yourself to new colors, to forest odors, and to strange sounds. You may miss the roar of traffic. The first morning the birds may keep you from sleeping. The snap of a twig, the snort of a deer, even the fresh air may awaken you. Perhaps the darkness, the sunrise, the patter of rain on the leaves, or even the calm lake will be disturbing. Some of you old-timers know that these sounds and colors and odors can become as music. Such things are the serenities of nature. They are nerve healers. More and more it is going to take training to acquire these peaceful elements of the world.

The serenity of nature surely belongs to little children. It is the child's birthright. If he does not acquire the depth-of-the-woods habit now he will never have it. He must have opportunity to stretch out his hands to feel of the rocks, to touch the trees, to run the rich, dark humus through his fingers. He must open wide the door of his shelter and let the wind be with him. He must give heed to the rustle of leaves and gain satisfaction at the sound of his own axe. He must give his eyes a chance to see the stars glitter from far overhead. Surely he must not remain in the "Twinkle, Twinkle" stage. After the rain he must know what it means to draw in a deep whiff of air and smell the freshness of the woods. The scent of pungent wood smoke in the nostrils can be his. He must gather such wealth first hand. It takes effort and training to harvest nature's gifts. It takes persistence and skill to acquire nervous stability. The serenities of nature are to be stored in childhood. They will be if childhood has the opportunity to win them.

Take a lake in a natural setting, for example. It is surely not to be bought. It is not merely a convenient place to swim. A lake, to be of value, is no longer a setting for two swans, a weeping willow, and a grotesque park bench. A lake is not meant for chalk-box houses and checker-board lots. It is not an easy thing to win a lake and keep it—to make

a particular lake with its rocks and bays and inlets and beaches one's own.

How can a lake become a possession? One surely has to get acquainted with "his" lake. The child will discover secrets by wading or by going out in a canoe. Perhaps he will delight in the color of the white bush honeysuckle on the shore; the wave of cattails; the call of the northern yellowthroat; the bound of the deer who comes down in the silence of the evening to touch the water. He may hear the cry of the loon. He may hear the laughter of other children from the wooded hill. He may sit at the helm and guide a sailboat into the waves and wind. He is not conquering the lake. The lake is possessing him. In time the lake does something to his soul.

What is true of the lake is true of flowers, and trees, and rocks, and wee animals. It takes time to get a feeling for rocks, the particular rocks in a particular camp.

All of nature's gifts can be used for construction. A large part of the world is using them for destruction. By what right have a few to determine that the wealth which belongs to all the inhabitants of the earth—our waters, our rocks, our wood, our oil, our coal, our iron, our landscape—be used to destroy one another? Boys and girls in America (but only in America) will soon be wending their way to a place where there is inward friendship for nature and an outward friendship for fellow beings. Whether it be to a lake deep in the woods or to a mountain or seashore camp, these youngsters are the greatest of nature's gifts.

It will take a master craftsman to build a structure out of such plastic material. These children are but one or two generations removed from the very same peoples who consider it necessary to use nature's wealth to destroy each other. These children are going camping together in nature. They are rising above circumstances of birth, race, and religion. You may see wood smoke curling lazily above the tree tops as they in their daily lives prepare food and break bread at their common tables. They are experiencing freedom and the instincts that are born in the depths of the woods. They are gathering unto themselves the serenities of nature.

(Courtesy Fall News Letter, ANSS)



# *LAND, WATER, and WILDLIFE*

By DR. H. H. BENNETT\*  
*Chief, U. S. Soil Conservation Service*

VIRGINIA IS IN a part of the country where various land and water problems challenge the attention and best efforts of all who are engaged in the conservation of natural resources.

State game and fish commissioners, for example, are concerned specifically with the conservation of beneficial wildlife—a natural resource that makes life worth living for a great many people and benefits most of us in a number of ways. The Soil Conservation Service is concerned primarily with conservation of soil and water—those basic resources without which there can be no wildlife or any other kind of life anywhere. So, fish and game people and soil conservationists clearly have a mutual interest and a common purpose in bringing about conservation of these resources in sufficient abundance for our lasting use and enjoyment.

By and large, wildlife conservationists and sportsmen in general have an unusually good understanding of the farmland conservation work which is progressing so rapidly all over the country, and a real and growing appreciation of its value in enhancing beneficial wildlife. This positive support of soil and water conservation is most encouraging.

The Soil Conservation Service gives specific attention to training in biology for its farm planners and other technicians who work out in the fields, pastures, and woodlots with farmers in soil conservation districts. The farm planner considers the value of treating various types of land, not only for their primary agricultural use but also with an eye to any modification or special practice that will result in more wildlife through complete and ade-

quate land treatment. He is expertly equipped to do this, because his understanding of the wildlife aspects of soil and water conservation planning and treatment is dovetailed with similar basic knowledge and adeptness in soil science, forestry, range management, agronomy, engineering, and other phases of a complete, coordinated soil and water conservation program of the kind that the Soil Conservation Service helps farmers apply to their lands. In other words, the soil conservationist is also a wildlife conservationist.

So it is that appropriate wildlife work is a part of the program and work plans of every soil conservation district and is tied in with other phases of our conservation operations. This is not left to chance; it is done consciously and with direct purpose. Soil Conservation Service wildlife objectives in soil conservation districts may be summed up as follows:

1. To apply to land-use problems biological knowledge useful in the prevention and control of soil erosion—that is, soil and water conservation—thereby preserving natural resources.
2. To achieve productive land use on all lands, including those not adapted to tilled crops, grazing, or wood production.
3. To assist in the solution of land-use problems which involve production of useful wild plants and animals on croplands, grazing lands, and woodlands.
4. To contribute to the prevention and control of biological damage arising out of measures established for soil and water conservation and related land-use practices.

There is only one correct formula for doing the

\*Adapted from an address by H. H. Bennett, Chief, U. S. Soil Conservation Service, at the Fourth Annual Convention, Southeastern Association of Game and Fish Commissioners Conference, Richmond, Virginia, October 16, 1950. (See also *Virginia Wildlife*, January 1950, p. 5.)



soil and water conservation job. It consists of treating the different kinds of land on a farm or ranch according to their individual needs as determined by such conditions as degree of erosion, waterlogging, etc., and using each kind according to its capacity for continued safe and economical production—whether that be for field crops, pasture, timber, or wildlife.

#### *Land Inventory Useful in Wildlife Development*

That is why the Soil Conservation Service puts so much emphasis on land capability surveys, which comprise a scientific inventory of the land and serve as the basis of the land's conservation planning and treatment. Through this inventory, made by Service technicians in cooperation with the farmers, we arrive at a sound and dependable classification of all the land on a farm according to its capability for best use. Thus, Capability Classes I, II, and III land, together comprise the kind of land which is suitable for continuous cultivation, with careful conservation treatment of Class II and III lands. Class IV land is a borderline grade, which can be cultivated safely only occasionally at best. Classes V, VI, and VII represent those lands which are suited only to growing grass or trees; and Class VIII land is suitable for wildlife or recreational use, or for watershed protection purposes.

This land inventory, which should be completed nation-wide at the earliest practicable date, has among its uses for other planning purposes particularly important potentialities for those who are concerned with developing wildlife resources—or the best use of land for all purposes in any way related to agriculture. For example, this capability classification shows a particular class of land which is suited better for watershed protection, recreation, and wildlife purposes than for any agricultural purpose; therefore, Class VIII land may be of great importance to wildlife and may be used solely for that purpose. This class of land may be found in extensive tracts, such as some coastal and inland marshes obviously not suited to growing cultivated crops or even grass or trees, but which can and should be managed for wildlife like waterfowl and fur bearers that can be produced on it. Such "wildlife land" often is found, also, in small areas on individual farms, where its development use for wildlife production is equally important.

All together, the land capability surveys already have shown that there is a large total area of this kind of land—probably 35 million acres or more. The fact that most of it is scattered through our good agricultural lands is a distinct advantage from



SCS Photo

**Eroded and gullied fields can still serve a useful purpose. Planting of shrubs and bushes will halt this erosion, and at the same time provide food and shelter for wildlife.**

the wildlife standpoint; because it encourages increased numbers of birds and mammals valuable to agriculture. These animals destroy insect and rodent pests and help to improve distribution of game locally. All this contributes to the farmer's income and to the nation's food supply.

#### *All Land Is Wildlife Land*

It should be emphasized, however, that the benefits of soil and water conservation from the game and fish standpoint are in no wise limited to specialized treatments of such special kinds of land. On the contrary, all land—with the water which falls on it or flows through it—is wildlife land. Moreover, all soil and water conservation, when properly planned and carried out, is wildlife conservation. In fact, the unprecedented attention being devoted to soil and water conservation today probably is contributing as much to the welfare of game, fish, and other beneficial wildlife as anything man has ever undertaken in this country or anywhere else. That is without in any way discounting the unquestioned importance in this regard to our state and national forests, parks, and wildlife refuges and sanctuaries.

Every acre of land we allow to be wasted because



of soil erosion means, among other undesirable and costly results, less wildlife. That is why the soil conservationists work on the premise that all farmland is wildlife habitat—a simple fact which every farm boy or girl knows, but which their elders sometimes become too preoccupied with doing other things to remember.

### *When The Land Goes, Wildlife Goes With It*

Game has been driven from farms, watersheds, and larger areas by soil erosion. Fish, waterfowl, and fur bearing game have disappeared from too many places because the streams and lakes have been polluted and filled, or partly filled, with erosion sediment. We have much to account for in the decimation of the game and fish that abounded in our forests, meadows, and streams back in the days of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. And we can't blame the severe depopulation of our wildlife in many localities entirely to guns and traps, by any means. We must credit a very substantial share of it, also, to the ax and plow which inevitably destroyed so much of the natural food and habitat for wildlife in the process of our country's settlement and development. Soil erosion also is an

enemy of the fishing and oyster business.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the farmlands of America comprise our principal fish and game habitat, and the farmer is our principal game manager. It must be apparent, then, that we are going to get the most effective wildlife improvement, both in quantity and distribution, by keeping this vast farmland habitat in its best producing condition. There is no other way to assure our overall wildlife populations of the future, just as there is no other to assure our future production of food and other crops except by preserving our good land which produces them.

What the farmer-organized and farmer-managed soil conservation districts are doing to this end—the progress the district farmers make in putting the various wildlife-benefiting soil and water conservation measures on the land—accordingly is of special interest and importance. There are now nearly 2,300 of these democratic, local units of state government. They include 80 percent of all the farms and three-fourths of all the land in farms in the United States.

But, of course, it is the conservation work that is being done—the actual conservation surveying, planning, and treatment of the land with needed control and beneficial measures—that really counts. The accelerated progress that has been made in this accomplishment likewise is noteworthy, in Virginia and throughout the nation. The wildlife-benefiting conservation measures going to make up this land treatment include, in the southeastern states, strip cropping; wildlife area improvement, including field borders, wildlife strips, and wetland improvement for wildlife; conservation woodland management and tree planting, and farm ponds.

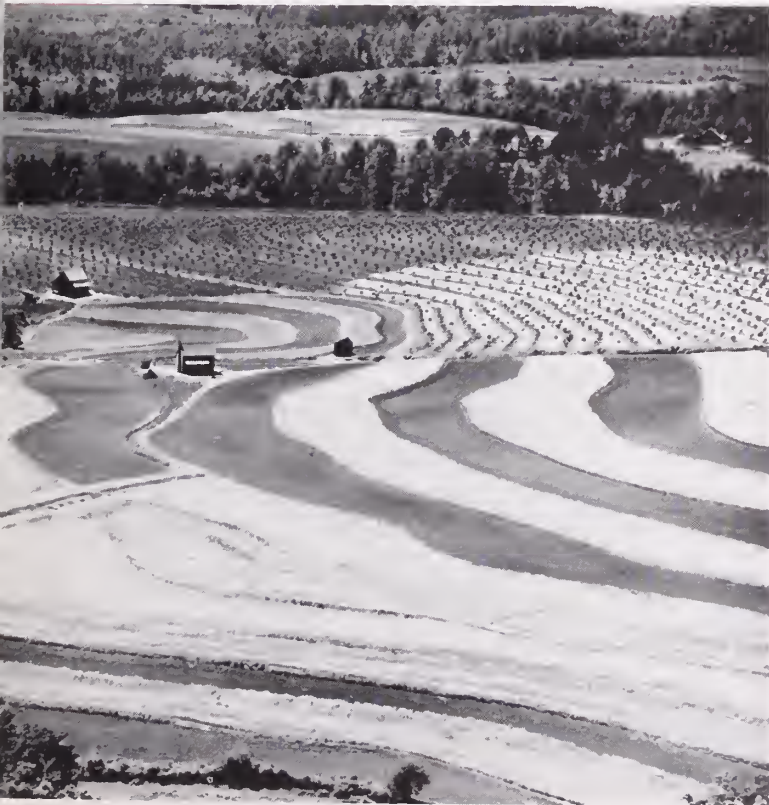
Virginia is among the many states throughout the country whose game and fish commissions are working with the districts. There is plenty of need for all that we can do together, whether it is in such undertakings as furnishing districts with such materials as sericea and bicolor lespedeza seed and plants for wildlife borders, maintaining cooperative projects for quail, or correcting unprofitable fish populations and controlling weeds in farm ponds.

It should be reemphasized that wildlife is considered by the Soil Conservation Service to be an important and valuable resource which merits fullest consideration in all of our conservation planning. In planning drainage works, for example, we attempt to point out those wildlife values to those with whom we work; and it is our stated policy to discourage drainage of open-water areas

*(Continued on page 18)*

Farms like the one below, show pride in the land. Contour farming protects the soil, and the varying crops and strips of woodland provide good habitat for wildlife.

*SCS Photo*







VSCC Photo

One of Virginia's turkey hens . . . the factory for next year's turkey crop.

# *Turkey Hunting* *in the* *Deep South*

By GEORGE C. CARLETON  
*Editor, Clarke County Alabama Democrat*

**T**URKEY HUNTING IS one of the oldest and best loved sports in the Old Dominion today, and to a real born-and-bred turkey hunter, no other form of sport offers the thrill and the satisfaction to equal the successful bagging of a lordly gobbler.

The answer to the problem of more turkeys is, I believe, the turkey hen. If Virginia's sportsmen could be made to see that the turkey hen is, to use

a homely simile, *the factory for next year's turkey crop*, and would do their utmost to protect it, then turkey production would climb astronomically.

Proof of this lies in the turkey story in Alabama, a great turkey state in its own right and a state that might be studied for the way in which it handles its turkey problems.

Briefly, Alabama's season is in two parts, November 20 to January 1, and March 20 to April 15. Hunters are limited to one turkey gobbler a day with a total of five for the two split seasons. It is unlawful to kill a turkey hen at any

time, and except for the typical game hogs, this law is carefully observed. Anyone caught with a turkey hen in his possession is made to pay a stiff fine. Even in those cases where a hunter accidentally or negligently kills a hen, but whose offense does not come to the knowledge of the game wardens, he is made the butt of so much ridicule by his companions that he isn't likely to repeat the offense.

Alabama has protected its turkey hens over a



long period of years and sentiment is solidly behind the law because we can see its results. Before this law was enacted the wild turkeys in the state were nearing extinction, although at that time there were relatively few hunters as compared with the number hunting today. Practically every county in the state now has wild turkeys again, with the heaviest turkey population centering in southwest and south Alabama. Some four or five years ago, in my home county of Clarke, the game warden divided the county into hunting districts and asked the hunters to aid in keeping a count of the gobblers killed during the two split seasons. This count showed that more than one thousand gobblers were killed during the full season. The number may vary up or down but there are approximately this many killed each year. We can afford to do this because we do not shoot our hens.

If the sportsmen of Virginia will adopt the Alabama plan and then see to it that the most favorable turkey ranges are rigidly protected, they will be surprised at the rapidity with which the turkeys will come back.

The chief advantage of such a program, as I see it, is that the increase will soon justify the opening of a spring season, or "gobbling" season such as we now have in Alabama. Alabama's true-blue turkey hunters—those who really know how to hunt turkeys—wouldn't give one week of the spring hunting for the entire fall season. That is the time when turkey hunting is a sport fit for kings.

I know of nothing that offers more in the way of sport, than to be at some favored spot as daylight begins to break on a crisp spring morning. A cardinal whistles, the thrashers begin clucking, and soon all nature is awakening. A barred owl makes one farewell call, and as he does so, the challenging gobble of an old turkey tom rings out. A pleasant tingling sensation courses up and down your spine. You maneuver into what you believe to be a favorable position, take your seat, and then begin the battle of wits—and skill. You make a good clear call—either a cluck or a yelp—and if he gobbles back at you, you become exceedingly chary with your calls from there on out. Unless you know exactly what you are doing, maybe you had better not call again. After a while you hear the old boy fly down and by his steady drumming and occasional gobbling you know that he has taken up a position some 150 yards out front. Finally the gobbling stops but the drumming continues. Then the drumming stops. Either he is on his way



*Photo by Mullins*

**In Alabama, protection of the turkey hen means more nests like this each spring, and more gobblers for the hunter in the fall.**



*Photo by Crawford*

**Bagging a turkey gobbler calls for real skill on the part of the hunter. This old tom succumbed to a cleverly used call.**

to you or has quit you cold. Every nerve in your body is tense. You hear a twig snap, and sure enough, there he comes, straight toward you. Careful now, wait until he is close enough, then shoot at his head. Good work, and you have a prize with a 10-inch beard and spurs that indicate he must be fully five years old.

Hunters of Virginia, don't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs! Spare your hens and enjoy the greatest sport known to hunters.



# *The Use of Ladino Clover In Wildlife Management*

By C. H. SHAFFER  
*District Game Technician*

*Ladino clover has been building good pastures for years.  
Now it's working for wildlife.*

**W**ILDLIFE MANAGERS AND technicians are constantly searching for a panacea for their game food problems but probably they will never find one. We have all learned long ago that one of the basic steps that can be undertaken in wildlife management work is that of providing a year-around food supply for the particular species that we are attempting to manage.

In Virginia we have recently been experimenting with the use of a pasture mixture composed of ladino clover and Kentucky fescue on some of our

publicly owned land. Plantings have been made in the hope of producing year-around food supplies for turkeys, deer, and rabbits. Results to date have been most encouraging.

We are in the midst of a land-use trend of ever-increasing cattle production here in the South, with the accompanying result that more and more crop land is being converted to extensive pastures and hay production.

It is needless to discuss what intensive hay production and pasturing does to food and cover for our game animals and birds. In the past, a wise hunter knew better than to take his dogs to pasture land in quest of quail and rabbits. Perhaps the day will soon come when sportsmen will recognize the value of improved pastureland as a likely area in which to find game.

For several years the soil conservation technicians

The author (left) looks over a planting of ladino on the Cumberland Forest.

*Photo by Shomon*





and county agents have been recommending the use of permanent pastures along with beef and milk production as a means of conserving the soil and as a method of spreading the farmer's income over the year. It may have been a blessing in disguise for wildlife administrators that the principal crop currently recommended by the agricultural workers is ladino clover. It is difficult to drive many miles through rural areas in the South without seeing a good stand of this brilliantly green legume. It is being planted for hogs and poultry as well as for cattle; farmers are coming to realize that it is the most versatile and most profitable of all forage crops.

The potentialities of ladino clover for wildlife were recognized only recently in Virginia. It first came to our attention during the summer and fall of 1949 in Cumberland County where the Cumberland State Forest is located. Here the Virginia Forest Service and the Virginia Game Commission have been managing the Forest cooperatively for the last decade in the production of timber and wildlife. The Cumberland Forest, comprising approximately 15,000 acres, is considered excellent wild turkey range and usually supports as many as twenty gangs of native wild turkeys in an average year. This area also supports an expanding deer herd. For years our wildlife managers have been planting a variety of annuals primarily for the benefit of the wild turkeys. Unfortunately, the deer herd has reaped most of the benefits from these annual plantings.

The Cumberland Forest is not a complete block of land, but is cut up rather irregularly with privately owned farms. On some of these farms the landowners have followed the trend toward cattle production during recent years and quite a few of these same farmers have planted pastures consisting of ladino clover, Kentucky fescue and/or orchard grass. From the beginning these farmers reported utilization of the ladino-fescue mixtures by turkeys, rabbits and deer. One of these pastures lies adjacent to the forest land and is located along the main road to the Cumberland Forest. Practically any day during the spring, summer and fall of 1949, a gang of turkeys could be seen feeding in the ladino clover pasture. On numerous occasions, deer were observed feeding on the same tract during the night and even in the daytime. After constant and widespread reports from landowners in the vicinity on deer and turkey utilization, it was decided that an experiment should be conducted by planting these mixtures on the pub-



*Photo by Shomon*

**Ladino provides a luxuriant green crop that may prove to be a blessing in wildlife management.**

licly owned land. Suitable areas were located and the land was prepared during August and September of 1949. Eventually eighteen plantings of approximately an acre in area were seeded. Plantings were established in both the Cumberland and the Buckingham-Appomattox State Forests. The seed was planted at the rate of 10 pounds of Kentucky 31 fescue and 2 pounds of ladino clover per acre. Fertilizer was applied at the rate of 400 pounds per acre and absolutely no lime was applied at that time.

The winter of 1949-50 was unusually mild and the eighteen widely separated pasture mixtures grew well during the late fall and early winter. Turkey and deer grazing was observed soon after the clover and fescue emerged from the ground. Fortunately, the plantings were not killed out by the heavy grazing and with the advent of springtime, the plantings flourished. During the latter part of April, a survey was made of the ladino plantings. All eighteen of the patches revealed rather heavy utilization by turkeys.

With the emergence of other green vegetation, the deer more or less deserted the ladino clover and did not return until early in May, but generally, the

deer have been utilizing all of the plantings ever since.

Throughout the period of observation, signs of utilization of the ladino clover by rabbits were rather widespread, especially along the edges of the plantings. During the past summer, numerous coveys of young quail were flushed from the ladino patches. To date it has not been determined whether the birds were feeding on the clover or on the insects which are quite plentiful in a planting of this nature. For those who are interested in groundhog management, it offers a preferred food to these animals as well. It appears that most of the favorite game species of the Southeast—deer, turkey, quail and rabbits have been utilizing ladino clover plantings.

It might be stated here that originally Kentucky fescue was believed to be the principal item that we hoped to establish in our food patches with ladino clover added only to produce nitrates for the Kentucky 31. However, observations indicate that even though the fescue is grazed when it is tender and green in the winter and spring, the ladino clover appears to be the preferred plant in the mixture where wildlife is concerned. To obtain more definite information, pure stands of ladino, Kentucky fescue and orchard grass have been seeded on adjacent plots so that observations can be made on the relative utilization of the three by turkeys, deer and rabbits.

From our limited experiences and observations on ladino clover, let us now examine critically the obvious advantages, as well as the shortcomings of this legume from a practical game management viewpoint.

On the credit side of the ledger, ladino clover plantings have been found to be utilized freely by most of our favorite game species. When annual planting are compared with ladino, the advantages are quite obvious. On one hand, we have a crop that may be consumed in a relatively short time and necessitates waiting an entire year until another crop can be produced, as compared with a food planting that will produce good grazing during the entire year and will keep coming back.

If ladino is a preferred food, and it appears to be one at this time, it may serve to retain game populations on managed areas. In locations where extensive crop damage from deer occurs, ladino clover plantings could conceivably act as a buffer in keeping the deer from ravaging farmers' orchards, corn, soya beans, peanuts or other cash crops.

With adequate fertilizer and lime, ladino clover pastures are relatively easy to establish and appear to be well adapted to most of our southeastern soils. Once a good sod is established, sprouting and

clearing on this land is eliminated. These are normally expensive items on wildlife management projects on publicly owned land. As conservationists, we should be interested in the fact that a ladino-fescue establishment will enrich the soil and retard erosion.

Many administrators and technicians may feel that the cost of establishing an acre of ladino - clover - Kentucky fescue is prohibitive. Cost figures will doubtless vary with the state and conditions existing there, but considering 1000 pounds of fertilizer, 2 tons of lime, 2 pounds of ladino clover seed, 10 pounds of

Kentucky fescue seed, plus one man-day with mechanized equipment, the cost would probably run between \$30 and \$40 per acre at present day inflated prices. However, the cost of establishing an acre of annuals will probably cost as much.

Some of the limitations or disadvantages of ladino clover should be considered here. Ladino plantings will require some maintenance. Since it is impossible for us in wildlife management to control the amount of grazing on the plantings, it appears that it is essential that the patches be mowed once or twice during the summer in order to obtain maximum benefits and growth. The first mowing should be made before the fescue seed matures, otherwise the fescue will soon dominate the pasture. We have found that farmers who live close to our publicly managed land will gladly mow and remove the hay merely for the asking. Agronomists recommend that ladino clover pastures be top-dressed yearly with fertilizer (0-14-14)

*(Continued on page 22)*





# CONSERVATIONGRAM

Late Wildlife News . . . At A Glance

DEER KILL FIGURES IN FOR WEST OF BLUE RIDGE: Final tabulation of the 1950 deer kill figures west of the Blue Ridge revealed a total of 2,253 deer taken there this year by Old Dominion nimrods, 300 more than were recorded in last year's kill figures.

Although the season had been cut from last year's six day open period, to three days this year, the success ratio per day of hunting was much higher during the 1950 season.

COOPERATIVE WILDLIFE RADIO PROGRAM LAUNCHED: the formation of a cooperative wildlife radio program featuring conservation news in the wildlife field has been jointly announced by I. T. Quinn, Executive Director of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, and by Allan W. Phaup, program director of Richmond's station WMBG-WCOD-FM.

The new program is scheduled for airing at 12:30 every Saturday afternoon and will be put on by Jack Lewis, sports editor of WMBG.

Each program in the series is scheduled to present a five minute round up of the latest wildlife news, followed by interviews with well known conservationists and sportsmen. A question and answer period on wildlife work in general will conclude the program.

INTERIOR SECRETARY PROTECTS WILDLIFE REFUGE: Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman has ruled that the proposed commercial development by private interests of the oyster shell deposits found on the East Cove Unit of the Sabine National Wildlife Refuge on the Gulf Coast of Louisiana—the largest and most important waterfowl wintering refuge in southern United States—should not be permitted because "such development will not be in the public interest."

The Secretary stated that the proposed exploitation of the shell deposits on the Sabine Refuge would operate to seriously affect the Mississippi waterfowl flyway.

VIRGINIA LUMBERMAN NAMED TO ADVISORY POSITION: John Camp, Sr., president of the Camp Manufacturing Company of Franklin, has been appointed to a position as one of four advisors on forest products to the National Production Authority. The NPA is the economic control agency of the Commerce Department.

Others appointed in addition to Mr. Camp are C. A. Bruce, Executive Vice-President, E. L. Bruce Lumber Co., Memphis, Tenn.; Swift Berry, formerly Manager, Michigan-California Lumber Co., Placerville, Calif.; and Charles W. Ingham, Fischer Lumber Co., Marcola, Oregon.

Their mission is to advise the Forest Products Division of NPA on all matters affecting lumber, particularly with regard to establishing effective cooperation between industry and government.



Planting and leaving food patches such as the milo above, will increase the winter carry-over of birds on your land.



Hand feeding of the birds is a help, but it can't do the job of a planted food patch.



This honeysuckle patch provides ideal cover from heavy winter snows and from predation.

Bleak and bare, the snow covered Virginia field patch plantings insure better winter bird survival.



An ear of corn on the stalk, or a few stems, will attract birds. Note the tracks in the picture on the left.

(Photos by 14)

**JAN  
IS THE CRIT  
FOR C**





ers lean pickings to this pair of quail. Food



miro will prove a magnet to winter-hungry  
it.

ad Kesteloo)

# ARY CAL MONTH UAIL



Tracks in the snow indicate that the birds have  
found and made the most of this patch of lespedeza.

Winter is the hard time of year on all the creatures of the field and forest. Usually, in Virginia, the winter months are open, and although it may be cold, still there is a fair amount of food available.

Two or three times in every winter, however, the Old Dominion is blanketed with a heavy snow fall and that is when wildlife really suffers.

Thinking farmers and sportsmen will leave standing grain, or plant winter feed patches to take care of this critical period. They know it pays off in dividends when the next hunting season rolls around!



Photo by Shomon

"I don't wish to argue. But if you insist. . . ."

*"He walks by night an' walks by day  
an' don' care what gits in de way"*

**O**LD MOTHER NATURE often proves the adage that "there's nothing new under the sun." Chisel-tooth the beaver was building dams thousands of years before the first ape-man placed his broad foot in a tiny rivulet and realized that the water backed up behind it.

Long before some British military genius devised that backbone of the armored forces, the tank, Nature brought forth the armadillo and the turtle to carry protective armor wherever they went.

In the military line still: man's most horrible weapon up until the atomic bomb was poison gas, but here again Ma Nature beat us to it. The one animal that "*walks by night and walks by day, an don' care what gits in de way*" is well equipped with its own form of that weapon.

The skunk, woods pussy, polecat, or what have you, is a perfect example of Teddy Roosevelt's famous foreign policy, "Walk softly, but carry a big stick." He is a gentleman, albeit an arrogant one. He never uses his weapon without just cause,

but he will tolerate no dispute as to his inherent right-of-way wherever he may be going.

In Virginia we have two members of the skunk family present, but of the two only one is commonly distributed state-wide. *Mephitis mephitis*, the striped skunk is known to practically everyone—but his smaller relative, *Spilogale putorius*, is a native of the mountainous areas, occasionally occurring in the Piedmont and rarely, if ever, in the Tidewater. Both species are well equipped with the special weapon of the clan. They are literally "loaded."

The striped skunk is noticeably larger than the spotted, with the male of the species measuring up to 24 inches in length from nose to tip of tail and weighing up to eight pounds. Spotted skunks seldom get above 20 inches in length and weigh considerably less than the striped variety.

Striped skunks get their name from the two white stripes which start as a single band at the head and then divide to run down each side of the back to the tail. These stripes vary with the individual animal and may be extremely broad or very narrow. The narrowly striped pelts bring more money on the fur market as the amount of black in the pelt determines its value.

The spotted skunk differs from the striped skunk in having numerous stripes along its back and sides. These stripes are broken up to give the animal a spotted appearance. Because of the un-

# SKUNKS of VIRGINIA

By R. T. SPEERS

Associate Editor, *Virginia Wildlife*



usual marking of the pelt, spotted skunk fur is often used "as is" in the fur trade although the finished garment usually is given some other name instead of skunk.

Probably no other animals have as many stories told about them as do skunks. To everyone but the victim there seems to be something uproariously funny in an encounter with one of the woods kitties. In just about 99 per cent of these encounters the skunk manages to come away the victor, with the result that somebody buries a set of clothes and for days afterwards gives off a faintly reminiscent aroma.

I remember a personal experience with a skunk that while not resulting in any dire consequences, still gave me a few bad moments. It happened at a friend's home when I was about fourteen. We had a date to go fishing and when I called for him he was already to go except that he had to empty the garbage before he left. The garbage receptacle was of the kind that is buried below the surface of the ground with just the lid showing. To open it you stepped on a lever on one side and the lid swung up. A removable inner bucket completed the assembly.

On this occasion, as I remember, we carried the food scraps out of the house to the receptacle, stepped on the lever and when the lid swung up a large and rather angry skunk sat on top of the refuse in the bucket and glared at us. We let go of the lid with a bang and then tried to figure out a method of removing the skunk from the pail without painful consequences. It was rather obvious that some one had left the lid up during the night, the skunk on his nocturnal wanderings had either fallen or jumped in, and now was too far down in the pail to get out by himself.

We debated various methods of removal but none of them seemed very practical until finally we found a scheme that worked. We brought out the garden hose and inserted the nozzle end gently under the cover and into the pail. Then we turned the water on. We attached a long rope to the cover and waited a little while then pulled the cover up. Shortly thereafter a very wet

and bedraggled skunk floated to the top of the pail, climbed out and took off to his own and our evident relief.

According to some authorities the skunk cannot expel the musk if their tails are held down. This may be true, but I have been unable to find any authority anywhere with directions on how to stop them from spraying *until* you get close enough to hold their tails down. Skunks are the Annie Oakleys of the animal world and anything within ten feet that they intend to hit is as good as sprayed. However, since their prize weapon is not inexhaustible they are understandably reluctant to use it and usually it is turned loose only as a last resort.

The method of spraying is rather unique in itself. The skunk places the object of his displeasure to the rear, puts his head down and looks back toward the victim. This behaviour is actually a primary warning and if the attacker retreats at this point, the skunk will usually just go on about his business. If the person is foolhardy enough to continue to press forward however, the white tipped tail will go up, the skunk will proceed to go into a stamping little dance with its hind feet, and then, oh brother, look out!

The musk itself is a yellowish fluid which is produced in the scent glands located internally on either side of the anal opening. It is a strongly acid liquid and can produce temporary or permanent blindness if it gets into the eyes.

Unfortunately for the skunk he seems to have developed a complete sense of safety based on the respect given him because of his unique weapon.

Up until the coming of the automobile age he was probably quite justified in his assumptions, but modern day high speed traffic takes a heavy toll of the fearless animals. Virginia's highways bear mute witness to this fact.

Aside from the hazards of the road, skunks have relatively few natural enemies. Probably the great horned owl is the only predator who includes the skunk as a regular item on the menu. Other predators might take a skunk in periods of extreme privation, but usually the woods kitty is avoided by the majority of the meat eaters. Rabid skunks are



"To think that once I couldn't stand you near me, and now we're in love!"

## SKUNKS

*(Continued from page 17)*

occasionally reported, but this condition is probably caused through being bitten by rabid dogs or foxes who, because of their condition, have lost any fear of the skunk's choking spray.

Because of the absence of major predators on the skunk, coupled with his ability to defend himself, the population seems to remain at a fairly high level. In fact, if the skunk had the prolificacy of the opossum he would really be a problem! Fortunately, skunks produce only one litter a year, but they still do a pretty good job even at that, with anywhere from five or six up to ten young skunks putting in an appearance. The gestation period lasts for nine weeks and the young are blind, hairless, and helpless at birth. Bringing up the family is strictly mama's job since once the mating period is over the male goes his own way. During the mating period, however, the males may engage in fierce fighting for the favor of a female. There seems to be no set rule as to monogamy or polygamy and both conditions are common.

Skunks, like other members of the mink and weasel family, will hunt along waterways for food, and many an unlucky frog and crayfish ends up as part of some skunk's menu for the day. Other

small forms of animal life are common items on the skunk's list of edibles. Field mice are particularly pleasing morsels, and much has been written about the skunk's apparent weakness for eggs, whether in a wild bird's nest or in some farmer's henhouse. Balanced one against the other though, the damage that the skunk may do in these depredations against game birds and domestic fowl is probably far outweighed by his service in ridding the farm of uncounted numbers of injurious insects, rats, and mice.

Up until a few years ago the skunk was the main source of revenue to the young farm boy turned trapper, but with the present market conditions for long furs, the value of the pelts is at a low ebb. Many a present day Virginian, however, can look back with a nostalgic memory to the days when taking another skunk pelt meant an extra box of shells for his gun, or a few coins to jingle in his pocket on a Saturday afternoon in town.

With importing of furs under fire at the present time for its effect on the American fur market, the skunk may once again get back his popularity in the market, and another generation of young trappers may yet exude the faint, but unmistakable aroma that labels those who fool with the black and white furbearer.

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## LAND, WATER AND WILDLIFE

*(Continued from page 7)*

where important migratory waterfowl habitat is affected. Because the decision remains with the farmer, however, it is necessary that the wildlife interests themselves present to the farmers a practical program that will in some way compensate them for utilizing their land as waterfowl habitat.

Wherever the land capability indicates that the land is best suited for wildlife, no conflict is involved, of course. Where the land capability indicates the land can be used safely and profitably for livestock, trees, or cultivated crops, however, it is only right that some incentive or compensation be made available to the landowner if that land is to be devoted to wildlife production. The form that compensation takes, and the way in which it is made available to the land-owner or operator, comprise one of the most important problems facing the wildlife profession today.

In all events, it is only through a coordinated land-use plan, based on a careful study of soils, location, engineering requirements, and other factors, that lands unsuitable for farm-crop produc-

tion may be safeguarded as wildlife habitats. The Soil Conservation Service is committed to continue doing everything it can to obtain effective cooperation with wildlife agencies and organizations, and in encouraging them to work more closely with soil conservation districts.

The way in which wildlife interests, for their part, including sportsmen's groups, state fish and game departments, and the rest, are backing up their support of soil and water conservation with physical assistance is most important, for the job has only been well begun. The farmers themselves, business and other community interests, and local, state, and federal government all have found by experience that effective soil and water conservation is profitable and satisfying all along the line. It hardly could be otherwise for anything so much in the public interest. With this continued dedication of our joint best efforts to this vital undertaking of safeguarding our soil, water, wildlife, and related resources, I am more confident than I have ever been before that we are going to do the job—do it right, and do it in time.





The James, with its three centuries of prideful history, rolls majestically past the skyline of Virginia's capital.

**T**HE JAMES RIVER is one of the important rivers in this country located wholly within one state. It is formed by the junction of the Jackson and Cowpasture Rivers at Iron Gate, a point about four miles below Clifton Forge, and flows in a southeasterly direction for a distance of 340 miles to the Chesapeake Bay at Hampton Roads. Its headwaters are at an elevation of 988 feet above sea level, and the fall at varying rates is substantial until it reaches Richmond, where it is affected by tidewater and is navigable to ocean going ships. Its drainage area consists of 10,060 square miles of which all but eighty square miles lie within the state. This drainage area covers parts of 43 of the 100 counties of Virginia. The nature of the country through which it passes so varies in character that all parts of the physiographic subdivisions of the state are included in its drainage basin.

From the peaks of the Alleghany and Blue Ridge mountains, through which it passes, the scene is an ever changing one down through the Piedmont

# The JAMES

By **ROSS O. WALKER**  
*Member, State Water Control Board*

section, the several miles of falls at Richmond and Tidewater.

The James River, therefore, has a very different meaning in the minds of people from the different sections of Virginia. West of the Blue Ridge, it is

a typical mountain stream and a beautiful one, where it has not been severely damaged by pollution; whereas near its mouth it is more than five miles wide.

Named for King James of England by those who established at Jamestown on its banks, the first permanent settlement of English speaking people in the new world, its basin has served as a habitat for English speaking people longer than any other area in this country. Much of the early history of this nation centers around this river, and after the expansion of civilized inhabitation many of the great colonial mansions were built and many of them continue to stand today on the banks of the James. The river in the early days served as a source of transportation and communication with the old world. The great abundance of fish and game

which existed in the James River, its lower tributaries and the nearby area, served as an important source of food for the early settlers, without which the permanency of the Jamestown settlement could hardly have endured.

It is fascinating and sometimes a bit saddening to read some of the earlier accounts of the abundance of these resources. While there was at that time great need for conserving many of the necessities of life which could not be provided other than by importation, there was no occasion then to think of the need of conserving natural resources, and this attitude of the people has lingered with succeeding generations, with the result that we have for too long a time done too little to prevent the depletion of such vitally important assets as the soil, forests, waters, fish and wildlife resources of this area.

While our lives are today adversely affected by



Two Virginia sportsmen find a quiet section above Richmond that holds some good fishing.



Occasionally, the James kicks over the traces in flood season, and rampages its way to the sea.

the lack of foresight in our failure to protect these resources, it is also a fact that the early development of fishing and hunting for sport has become a tradition among the succeeding generations, and many of us today are indebted to our forefathers who settled in this section for having created in us an appreciation of these sports.

Though this river, its tributaries and contiguous territory, has deteriorated greatly during the last several years in respect to the abundance of fish and wildlife, it is still an area where fishing and hunting is enjoyed by an ever-increasing number of individuals. It is an area wherein there is great promise of improvement. This is most important because it is accessible to a very large part of the population of the state. It is vitally important to the increasing number of people who will inhabit the James River area of the state that they should have the privilege of enjoying the out-of-door recreation that will mean so much to their mental and physical well being, as it has to those of preceding generations. It is and can be much more important to their enjoyment of outdoor recreation.

The fish and wildlife resources of this area are as varied as are the geographic variations. The headwaters and tributaries are a natural habitat for trout, smallmouth bass, and many other game fishes which thrive in the cold running waters there existing.

After the James passes from the mountain area and on down through the long series of falls at Richmond, it is a natural habitat for the many other fresh water game fishes that thrive in waters of higher temperature. In spite of the very extensive pollution to which a large part of the river is subjected, the fishing for large and smallmouth bass is at times quite good in many sections of this middle area. Below tidewater it is a natural habitat for various species of anadromous fishes such as striped bass, shad, herring, and various other varieties.

Sturgeon fishing in the Tidewater area has in times past been of considerable economic importance. While these great fish are now rarely taken, it is hoped that when pollution has been substantially reduced they may become more numerous.

Part of the lower Tidewater area has the distinction of being probably the greatest producing area now known for seed oysters. It has been estimated that the commercial value of these seed oysters alone is \$1,000,000 per year.

The Marine Laboratory established in recent years at Gloucester Point on the York River, work-





VSCC Photo

**Family outings are a specialty along the beautiful shore of the James. Pollution control has played an important part in restoring the river for recreation.**

ing in cooperation with the State Commission of Fisheries and the College of William and Mary and under the able direction of Dr. Marshall is making studies of the shell fishes and fin fishes which exist in the Chesapeake Bay area including the lower part of the James. These studies should reveal opportunities for greatly increasing the importance of these marine resources.

While the entire river is a natural location for these various types of fish and a natural location for various species of wildfowl and fur bearing animals, it is unfortunately true that in substantial areas its waters are so seriously polluted by domestic and industrial wastes, as well as soil erosion, that the existence of fish and wildlife is of meager proportions. In many areas this pollution has caused so much damage that the river can probably never be brought back to such a condition as existed many years ago. Much of it, however, can and must be cleaned up.

The Water Control Law, which prohibits pollution of unpolluted state waters, and charges the Water Control Board with the duty of causing abatement of pollution which existed when the law became effective on July 1, 1946, has resulted in the prevention of further damage. There has been definite progress in reducing some of the industrial wastes, and many of the polluting municipalities in

this area are in process of providing for the treatment of sewage wastes.

It will take time to bring about the elimination of harmful pollution in many parts of the river, but with the aid of public opinion, which is becoming increasingly conscious of the importance of conserving these resources, and the cooperation of those agencies, both state and federal, who are working toward that end, there is justification for hope.

The fine work being done by the Soil Conservation Service in encouraging better farm practices, and the work of the forest services of the state and federal governments, are causing and should cause considerable improvement in the condition of this river. The Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries is doing a fine job of stocking trout, bass, and other game fish wherever the condition of the river permits, but since it is recognized that fish, like game, are dependent upon food and habitat, there are many sections of the river where restocking would be useless. We cannot hope to have good fishing where pollution causes fish to be killed or where it prevents the growth of food which fish require.

The scientific approach of the technical men on fish and wildlife gives us assurance that, as the

*(Continued on page 22)*

## THE JAMES

(Continued from page 21)

waters of the James River are relieved of pollution, we may expect stocking of the proper species of fish to move forward rapidly.

The James is one of Virginia's greatest assets. It serves to supply the water requirements of many important industries and is capable of continuing to do so when the treatment of industrial and municipal wastes progresses. It is also a domestic water supply for a large part of our urban population and must continue to be such. Its scenic beauty in many of its parts is an added attraction to the tourists who contribute so importantly to the economy of this state. It is capable of serving us even more importantly in these many ways if it is protected from some of the abuses to which it has been subjected.

In discussing the subject of the James River, it is quite fitting to pay tribute to the Virginia Academy of Sciences for having inspired and caused to be recently published, "The James River Basin, Past, Present & Future." This book provides much interesting information in respect to its geographic and historic aspects as well as the existing resources of this area.

## LADINO CLOVER

(Continued from page 12)

which would add to the cost of maintenance, but when all factors are considered, money spent for fertilizer is well spent.

There is much evidence that a pure stand of ladino clover will cause severe bloating among live-stock; whether it will produce the same effect on deer populations is not definitely known by the writer at this time.

During periods of deep, persistent snow, ladino clover floor plantings would be valueless, since ladino seldom grows over 18 inches in height and during the wintertime will be bedded down to a lower height. Fortunately, snow in the southeastern states is not usually a problem.

In conclusion then, southern landowners and agricultural workers alike have found that ladino clover is perhaps the most valuable forage crop ever introduced. It is causing a revolution in land use management and increasing farm income wherever used. From our experience with it on the State Forests of Virginia, ladino-fescue plantings are utilized by turkeys, deer, rabbits and even quail. It may prove to be an answer to many of the wildlife managers' problems. Only time and experience will tell.

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## THE LAW EXPLAINED

Conducted by M. WHEELER KESTERSON

*Chief, Division of Law Enforcement*

Questions: Suppose a person "possesses," or has the "custody" of, an unlicensed dog over the age of four months, and such dog is owned by another person, say, who lives in California; can the person "possessing" or having the "custody" of such dog be found guilty of a statutory offense and punished therefore? (See Sections 29-184 and 29-185 of Code of Virginia.)

Answer: *The owner or custodian is responsible for dog in their possession.*

Reference: *See Sections 29-183, Page C, of Code of Virginia, and page 129, Section 60 (d) of Game Law Pamphlet.*

Question: Is it unlawful to hedge herring? If so, where can I find the penalty?

Answer: *It is unlawful to obstruct any stream so as to prohibit the free passage of fish.*

Reference: *Section 29-151 of Code of 1950. Pages 120 and 121 of Section 41, Game Law Pamphlet.*

Question: Is it legal to set trot lines in James River if live bait is not used?

Answer: *No. Not legal under any conditions.*

Reference: *Pages 114, 115, and 116, (see exceptions) Game Law Pamphlet.*

Question: If a person were fishing under a bridge on a state highway, would he be required to have permission from the one who owns the land along the highway?

Answer: *The person fishing would not be required to have permission, as he would be fishing on public property and not on private property. However, he could be standing on a bridge and close enough to privately owned property and fishing from the bridge or other construction over on private property, which would be unlawful. As long as he fishes from the bridge or under the bridge on the property owned by the State Highway Department in fee simple, he would not have to have a permit, as that is not considered private property.*





### *Winners Receive Prizes In State-Wide Deer and Bear Contest*

The final judging in the third annual State-wide deer and bear contest was held November 18th at the offices of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries. Winners in the Big Game Trophy Contest assembled in the Commission's Hearing Room and received their prizes and certificates from I. T. Quinn, Executive Director for the Commission.

First place went to Bruce E. Orndorff, of Winchester, Virginia, with a beautiful deer head sporting 22 points. Mr. Orndorff was presented a sterling silver fruit bowl for taking top honors. Mr. John R. George, of Harrisonburg, accepted the prize for Mr. Orndorff, who was unable to be in Richmond in person.

Second place went to Ben H. May, of Hinton, Virginia, who killed an unusually large deer in Rockingham County.

Third place went to H. M. Carpenter, of Bolar, Virginia, for a deer killed in Highland County.

Fourth place went to Roy D. Hodge, of Headwaters, Virginia, for a deer killed in Highland County.

Fifth place went to Willie Kitchen, of Ivor, Virginia, for killing a nice deer in Southampton County. The deer killed was an old buck name "Old Mousie" who had been eluding hunters in the county for six years.

Sixth deer prize went to R. M. Felts, of Ivor, Virginia, for a Surry County deer.

Seventh place went to J. A. Terry, of 3621 E. Broad Street, Richmond, for a splendid deer taken in King and Queen County.

Eighth place went to Drummond Richardson, Jr., of Lightfoot, Virginia, for a York County deer.

Ninth and final place went to Hunter Darricott, of Holdercroft, Virginia, for a Charles City County deer.

First place in the bear division was J. A. Stora, of Hampton, Virginia, for a large black bear killed in the Dismal Swamp. Mr. Stora was on hand to receive his award, a handsome sterling silver vegetable dish. He was also awarded the roving trophy for the best bear taken during the 1949 season.

Preliminaries to the State finals, were two regional deer and bear contests held east and west of the Blue

Ridge. The Western Virginia Big Game Trophy Contest was concluded at Harrisonburg on November 4 and was sponsored by the Rockingham-Harrisonburg Chapter of the Izaak Walton League.

The eastern regional contest was held November 11 at Newport News, where the Virginia Peninsular



*Photo by Kesteloo*

Mr. John R. George, of Harrisonburg, receives the trophy for the best deer head in behalf of Bruce E. Orndorff, who was unable to be present. Commission Executive Director, I. T. Quinn, presents the trophy.

Sportsmen's Club sponsored the eastern regional contest, as well as an association contest of their own. George B. Johnson, of Hilton Village, prominent Tidewater sportsman, was one of the leading judges in the contest and is largely to be credited with working out the intricate point system by which deer antlers are judged.

The Big Game Trophy contest has become an annual affair and is increasing in popularity every year. The Commission is encouraging competition in the contest as it promotes wholesome State-wide competition among sportsmen and has proven to be a boon to conservation and good fellowship.

### *Forest Industry Group Elects Virginian*

J. L. Camp, Jr., of the Camp Manufacturing Company, Franklin, Va., was recently named to the board of directors of American Forest Products Industries, Inc. He succeeds P. H. Glatfelter, of the

P. H. Glatfelter Company, of Spring Grove, Pennsylvania, who will continue as treasurer.

Officers and trustees who attended the meeting at the Mayflower Hotel included executives from leading lumber, pulp and paper and plywood manufacturers. President N. F. McGowin, of the W. T. Smith Lumber Company, Chapman, Alabama, presided. Other officers included Walter J. Damtoft, Champion Paper and Fibre Company, Canton, N. C., and Clyde S. Martin, Weyerhaeuser Timber Company, Tacoma, Washington, vice-presidents; and Charles A. Gillett, Washington, D. C., secretary and managing director. All officers were re-elected.



Photo by Kesteloo

"Uncle Tom" Herring, member of the Game Commission from Dayton, addresses the sportsmen's meeting at Elkton, sponsored by the Merck Rod and Gun Club. Sportsmen were informed on the progress of the "Virginia Plan."

### *Commission Director And Forest Service Personnel Report On Virginia Plan*

At a series of meetings held west of the Blue Ridge during the month of November, I. T. Quinn, Executive Director of the Game Commission, accompanied by E. M. Karger, Supervisor of the George Washington National Forest, and A. L. Cochran, Supervisor of the Jefferson National Forest, reported to the sportsmen of the mountain counties on the status of the cooperative wildlife program between the state and federal governments.

Meetings were held at Elkton on October 30, at Stuarts Draft on October 31, at Roanoke on November 1, and at Bluefield on November 2. Two regional U. S. Forest Service men from the Philadelphia office, W. S. Swingler, chief forester for this region and Ted Fearnow, who is in charge of regional wildlife management, accompanied the local men on the tour. Commissioner T. G. Herring was present at the Elkton and Stuarts Draft meetings, and Commission chairman Beverley W. Stras, Jr., was present at Bluefield.

### *Fall Meeting of Green Spring-Cleveland Wildlife Association*

The regular fall meeting of the Green Spring-Cleveland Wildlife Association was held Monday night, November 6, at Good Hope School, near Abingdon, in Washington County. There was a good attendance with all communities in the association area well represented. Several visitors were also present for the meeting.

Action taken during the business session, preceding the scheduled program, included participation in a club subscription to the *Virginia Wildlife* magazine.

A report on quail population was made by Mr. David Thomas, vice-president of the association. Mr. Thomas quoted figures compiled from a survey made throughout the association area by the Board of Directors. This report revealed, among other things, that the quail population in the area has nearly doubled since last year. It was concluded that this sizable increase has been due to two things: first, the assistance given the birds by the farmers, and second, the mild winters experienced for the past two years. The assistance rendered the birds by the farmer members of the association, has been twofold; planting feed strips, and controlling the amount of hunting in the association area.

Following the business session, the association president, Pete Hope, introduced Washington County Game Warden Ernest Yeatts to the group. Warden Yeatts made a short talk explaining the new regulation in Washington (and other counties), this year, requiring all deer hunters to purchase a deer damage stamp. He explained that the funds received from the sale of this stamp will be used to pay farmers' claims for damage to their crops by deer and bear. Mr. Yeatts commented also on the present regulations regarding legal deer which may be killed in the coming deer season in the county. After further short comment, Warden Yeatts introduced the guest speaker of the evening, Mr. Philip Collins, of the Education Division, Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, Richmond, who spoke on wildlife conservation and showed the Commission's new film, "Coveys and Singles," to the group.

### *Highland County Warden Gets Tricky Violator*

Highland County warden Harper Corbett is a man with sharp eyes, as a game law violator found out recently.

Warden Corbett stopped a man last fall before the open hunting season, on suspicion of shooting squirrels illegally. During the course of the conversation Warden Corbett's eyes fell upon one of the hub caps on the man's car—and on a trickle of blood on the cap. On closer examination the hub cap produced four squirrels—and resulted in a \$25.00 fine and \$4.25 court costs for the law breaker.





## PRESERVATION OF "LIVING MUSEUMS" SOUGHT THROUGH NATURE CONSERVANCY BILL

Seeking to save some of the remaining natural areas as "living museums" of primeval America for the benefit of future generations and for scientific study, Congressman Charles E. Bennett of Florida has just introduced a bill to establish a Nature Conservancy of the United States.

The Nature Conservancy is to be a voluntary supported nonprofit organization with membership open to the public. The bill does not provide for any appropriations from the federal government.

The Nature Conservancy is designed to supplement the efforts of the National Park Service and to be an extension of the nature preservation side of the state park programs. The principal job will be to aid in the preservation of small natural areas and to help retain some of the natural features of the landscape for public enjoyment. Local areas of special scientific, educational, and esthetic value will be given most attention.

Typical examples of many kinds of natural features will be sought out and preserved. This will usually be done cooperatively with county or state governmental agencies or with local conservation organizations, schools, or museums. The organization also will give technical advice to landowners interested in nature preservation.

## HUNT SAFELY!! SHOOTING IS FUN FOR THOSE WHO ARE CAREFUL!!

In the year 1941 The Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute initiated a test cam-

paign in a number of selected states to determine the value of Safety Cautions posted in hunting areas and other strategic places. In a nine-year period starting with 1941, a compilation of the annual hunting accidents in six of these states, which regularly filed their accident data, shows A REDUCTION IN FATAL ACCIDENTS FROM 6.4 PERSONS PER 100,000 LICENSES TO 3.2 PERSONS, AND NON-FATAL ACCIDENTS FROM 30.5 PERSONS PER 100,000 LICENSES TO 21.8 PERSONS.

This year 19 State Game Commissions have ordered 80,000 copies of the new series of 6 Posters.



In addition every State Game Commission has been asked to reproduce the Posters in their monthly magazines so that these safety messages may reach the sportsmen who might not otherwise see them.

A sample poster is shown above.

## KENTUCKY FUR COLLECTOR SUGGESTS BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN FURS

The following is a reprint of an article written by C. D. Woods, raw fur collector of Saldisa, Kentucky. Mr. Woods is one of the many raw fur collectors in the United States who would like to see all foreign furs being kept out of the United States, especially peltries from Russia. He suggests that the American women be educated to the "true facts of the situation." This following statement by Mr. Woods was printed in *The Raw Fur Bulletin*, Chicago, November 1.

"We all have been hoping and praying that our government would do something about the dumping of Communist furs into this country duty-free. But our government, apparently, is not interested in the raw fur dealers. If we could show Washington where two million votes are at stake, the President might make an effort to correct this situation. However, we are not organized to do this. In my opinion, the reduction of the 20% tax would not help our long-haired furs too much because they are not being promoted by the manufacturers and retail trade. This tax reduction would only help the short-haired furs, which are mostly Communist furs. So, the time is now ripe for all of the raw fur dealers to appeal to the patriotism of the American woman. They would probably refuse to buy the Communist furs when the truth is put before them. Every one of you raw fur dealers should write an article to your local daily paper, explaining your point of view and attacking the promotion of Russian, Chinese and Siberian furs."



for  
Students  
Teachers  
Parents

## BIRD OF THE MONTH

### The Tree Sparrow

No visitor from the north is more harmless or welcome than the tiny tree sparrow. He arrives in October with other tourists in search of milder climes and winter food.



The annual winter visits of the tree sparrow have little to do with escaping the cold blasts of the north. He is well equipped to weather these as he often makes his home where temperatures fall to 30 degrees below zero. Tree sparrows are driven south by the deep snows that cover his breeding grounds and the weeds upon whose seeds he subsists.

On Virginia's cold and snowy days, the tree sparrow is found along woods borders, roadsides, and waste places, ever seeking the taller weeds that are not covered by snow. It has been found that this beneficial little bird eats about one-fourth of an ounce of seed daily. They remain in the state about 200 days. Therefore, each bird eats 50 ounces of weed seed during its stay in Virginia. This amount multiplied by the thousands of birds present certainly results in a product of great value in the control of weeds.

Although this friendly little gray-brown bird spends much of his life in the middle latitudes, it nests in the far north. Few bird lovers have observed the courtship and nests of tree sparrows for they nest beyond the limit of trees. Their nests are built on the ground of grasses and weed stems and are lined with feathers. Five or six eggs, resembling those of the song sparrow, are laid. Nesting is dependent on the weather and does not occur until June. Only one brood is attempted.

One of our most harmless birds, it is hardly necessary to recommend that he be protected. The tree sparrow's diet does not include the farmer's grain or fruit, and even if it did, these items are not available during his welcome winter visit.

### WARDEN BILL'S PATROL

Well, I can't predict how things will be in Virginia's fields and woods during this January, but I can remember a few things about January's past.

Most hunting ends during this month and our wildlife can get back to normal living without worrying about which direction the next load of shot will be coming from. But strange as it seems, what they've just gone through will seem like a picnic when compared to what's ahead for most of them.

Many a quail, rabbit, squirrel, and deer have ended up in someone's stew-pot during the last couple of months, but believe it or not, they were lucky. At least their end came quickly. January, February, and March mean hard times for Virginia's Wildlife. Food is naturally scarce at this time of year and snow and ice storms make the little that is present impossible to get. It's during this critical period that many birds and animals actually starve to death, or become so weak that they are easy for the predators to catch.

The sad part of all this is that these losses are so unnecessary. If people would only put a small part of the time and money they spend for hunting into food and cover plantings, this late winter kill by Mother Nature could be avoided and there would be a lot more game during the hunting seasons that follow.

Wild things don't require an awful lot, just food and cover to hide in. If we will give them that and protect them from the thieves of the forest—I mean violators—there'll be a lot more game and they'll have an easier time of it.

Until next month then when I'll have another message for you about Virginia's wildlife friends, I'll have to say goodbye. Don't forget to write to me here in Richmond in care of *Virginia Wildlife*, Box 1642, if you have any questions that you want answered on wildlife or nature in general.

And one more thing. Don't forget to enter the big 4th Annual Essay Contest this year. Maybe you'll win one of the top prizes! The back cover of this magazine will tell you all about it.

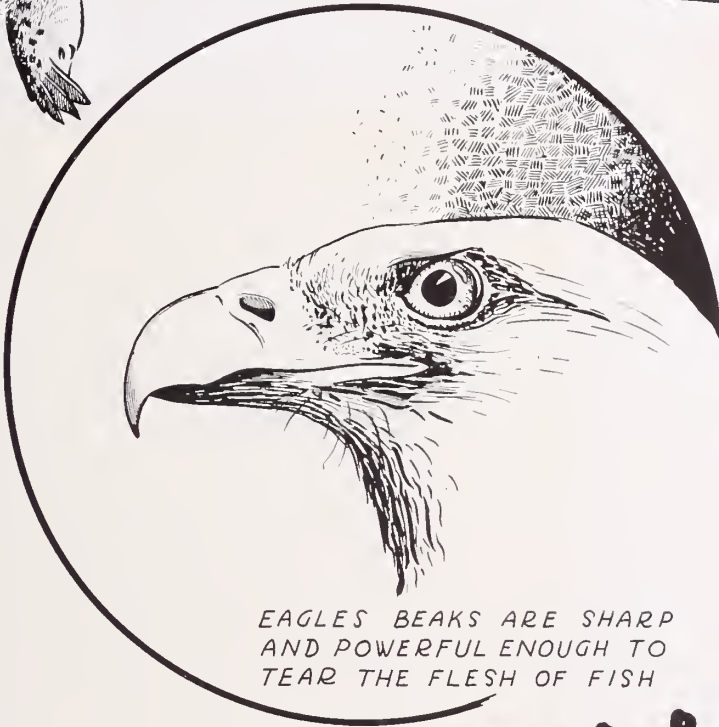




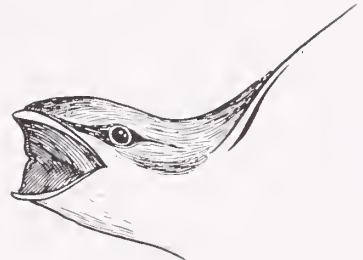
THE HUMMINGBIRD'S LONG  
BILL REACHES THE SWEET  
NECTAR WITHIN FLOWERS



MUD IS SEPARATED FROM  
FOOD BY STRAINERS ON  
THE BILL OF A DUCK



EAGLES BEAKS ARE SHARP  
AND POWERFUL ENOUGH TO  
TEAR THE FLESH OF FISH



SWIFTS FLY WITH THEIR  
HUGE MOUTHS WIDE OPEN  
AS A TRAP FOR INSECTS

## BILLS AND THEIR USES



THE SHORT, CONICAL BILL  
OF A SPARROW IS THE  
MARK OF A SEED-EATER



A STOUT AND STRAIGHT  
BEAK MAKES POSSIBLE  
THE STRONG HAMMERING  
OF THE WOODPECKER



CROSSBILLS EASILY PRY  
APART SCALES OF PINE  
CONES TO SECURE SEEDS





**You still  
have time to win  
if you get your  
essay in now!**

**THE  
FOURTH ANNUAL  
\$1000.00  
WILDLIFE ESSAY CONTEST**  
*ends Feb. 28, 1951*

**IT'S EASY TO WIN!**

Because students will compete only against other students throughout the State in their own grade level. ALSO, there will be seven prizes ranging from \$5 to \$50 awarded in each grade, five through 12.

**Follow these easy CONTEST RULES now!**

1. Essays must be submitted through the schools participating and each essay must contain a minimum of 500 words on the subject of: **The Importance of Wildlife Conservation and Related Resources.**
2. Each entry should bear the following information in the upper right-hand corner of each essay: name, sex, age, grade, address, school, county, and teacher.
3. Students of Virginia schools, grades 5-12 inclusive, will be eligible to enter this contest.
4. ALL essays must be mailed first class, prepaid, to **ESSAY CONTEST HEADQUARTERS, Box 1642, Richmond, Virginia.** Deadline for submission of entries is midnight, February 28, 1951. Each school must mail essays from all grades at one time.
5. No papers will be returned and the decision of the judges will be final. Each sponsoring organization will appoint two conservationists to serve on the judging committee:

**TEACHERS:  
FREE REFERENCE  
MATERIAL AVAILABLE!**

WRITE Wildlife Essay Contest Headquarters, Box 1642, Richmond 13, Virginia for reference material. We will rush you such material as we have and will include a list of other possible sources.

**57 prizes**

Eight grand prizes, \$50 each, one  
for each grade, totaling-----\$400

Eight second prizes, \$25 each, one  
for each grade, totaling-----\$200

Eight third prizes, \$15 each, one  
for each grade, totaling-----\$120

Sixteen honorable mention prizes,  
\$10 each, two for each grade,  
totaling -----\$160

Sixteen special mention prizes, \$5  
each, two for each grade, totaling \$ 80

One school prize, best response---\$ 40

Grand Total -----\$1000

**Hand in your  
essay now!**

